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Stick handling smiles

The Haliburton County Huskies took a break from the ice to decorate cookies for the annual Tim Hortons Holiday Cookie Campaign this past week in Minden and Haliburton. All proceeds from the cookies went towards local food banks and foundation camps. For more photos, see inside this edition. /submitted

Councillors disappointed in roundtable turnout

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Minden Hills is seeking the community's input towards their Five Year Strategic Plan.

The first public consultation this year was held virtually over Zoom on Wednesday, Nov. 19.

Politicians participating in the discussion outnumbered the public. Only three participants of the session were either seasonal residents or full-time residents of Minden Hills.

The session was led by Karen Jones Consulting.

The first question that was asked was on events. Participants were asked what type of events bring people together, what events should be revived, and what events would bring families out to attend.

Jamie Basco, a MH resident, said that he enjoys the Haliburton County Fair that happens every year in Minden.

"It's good to see that in the community and at the ice races in the winter time," said Basco.

The past sled dog races that used to go through Minden were also discussed as an event that drew a large crowd in the past.

Another set of questions asked participants how staff can get people coming into downtown Minden, spend more time there, and enjoy the community spaces in town.

Susan Roper, a seasonal resident of Minden who hails from Scarborough, said that many of her friends that are seasonal residents refuse to shop in any store in Haliburton County. They do not want to venture into town at all.

Roper also suggested moving the community farmers' and artisan market to the main street in town. To get people into town, you need to get people involved that are close to the community or those who can quickly make connections.

The next set of questions involved volunteerism. Topics included how to tap into the interest and talents of volunteers, hurdles to volunteering, recognition of volunteers, and how seasonal residents can contribute while they are away.

Topics such as the hurdles due to insurance and the shooting down of ideas before they get the chance to flourish were mentioned.

The next set of questions involved how to stay connected as a community and how residents can gain momentum towards goals discussed during the public consultation.

"We are a community that comes together," said Deputy Mayor Lisa Schell. Schell, noting that when someone needs support, the community is quick to band together and support one another.

Cathay Mauro said that the Pride celebrations in Minden are a huge benefit to the community.

Public representation and outpouring, vocal support of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities within Haliburton County and beyond remind others that members of that community are valued in Minden. More awareness leads to more open-mindedness.

The importance of water with the Gull River running through town was discussed. People enjoy floating down the river and coming into town.

Buildings that are boarded up and

see OLD page 12

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HHHS launches corporate giving program

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Heat-Line management along with Melanie Klodt Wong, the executive director of the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation, at their announcement for the new corporate giving program. /submitted

In honour of National Philanthropy Day on Nov. 15, local business Heat-Line has made a commitment to ongoing healthcare in the community.

"Our company has always believed in giving back to the community that helped us grow," said Matthew Roberts, President of Heat-Line. "Together with Laura Roberts and Brent Heise, we are proud to support the HHHS Foundation and to help strengthen access to care for everyone in the Highlands."

The donated amount is part of a new corporate giving program, in which the organization has committed to giving $25,000 over the next five years. "This contribution from Heat-Line perfectly embodies the spirit of the day, reflecting the company's roots in the Haliburton Highlands and its ongoing commitment to supporting local healthcare and the broader community," reads a press release from Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS).

In September of this year, the Algonquin Highlands based Heat-Line announced that they have appointed Matthew Roberts as president, Brent Heise as vice president of sales and technology, and Laura Roberts as vice president of quality management. Co-founders Lorne Heise and Robin Heise continued in strategic roles as vice president of product development and innovation and vice president of finance, respectfully. "These appointments mark the transition to the next generation of the founding family," said the announcement. "Brent and Laura are the children of the co-founders, and Matthew is their son-in-law."

And the shift in ownership has readily committed to bettering the community in any way they can. "Heat-Line is a family-founded local company, now led by the next generation," said Melanie Klodt Wong, the executive director for the HHHS Foundation. "They've always believed in giving back to the community that helped them grow."

"The benefit to this type of program is that it's more foundational," said Roberts. "It allows for the benefit of planning. They're able to start their next year with money in their pocket."

This financial commitment marked the official launch of the new corporate giving program from the foundation. The program is designed for local businesses who want to make a longer-term investment in the health of the community. "We're so fortunate to have businesses that consistently give back, each in their own way," said Klodt Wong, "and this program gives them another meaningful way to do that."

Roberts confirmed that the launch of the corporate giving program is the first community initiative that the new leadership team at Heat-Line has undertaken. "As we've grown this business, we've become more detailed with our budgets, and I like the planned, committed approach to giving back."

While the foundation implements ongoing fundraising initiatives, the need for community medical support continues to grow. The organization raises funds to support the equipment, programming, and facility needs of Haliburton Highlands Health Services, ensuring high-quality healthcare for residents and visitors across Haliburton County.

AH council receives hospital update

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

A new hospital could be servicing county residents soon.

On Thursday, Nov. 20, President and CEO of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare Cheryl Harrison and Board Chair Dave Uffelmann updated Algonquin Highlands Council on the two new hospitals that are to be built in the Muskoka region. The delegation sought support from Algonquin Highlands Township to contribute to their healthcare project.

"We have old and outdated buildings that can make it very challenging to provide the best care in our hospitals," said Uffelmann. "We need to get rid of the obstacles that are in front of them."

Uffelmann reported to the council that many sections of the hospitals do not even have fire sprinklers.

"We don't have enough space," said Uffelmann. "Occupancy often hits above 130 per cent and you can understand the implications of managing in that environment."

Uffelmann says that they are well along the way to getting the two new hospitals built. One of the hospitals will be built in Huntsville on existing land and another hospital will be built in Bracebridge on newly purchased land.

In November of last year, Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare submitted their 1.3 Proposal for Capital Redevelopment to the Ontario Ministry of Health. The proposal included redevelopment plans for redesigns of the hospital sites with a focus on new and advanced technology, input from the public, an environmentally friendly planned construction, and cost estimates.

"We expect government approval of that stage in the next few months," said Uffelmann. "We have answered all the questions and are just waiting now."

The new hospitals are planned to offer 90 per cent single patient rooms, compared to 20 per cent currently.

"Bracebridge will become a centre of excellence for ambulatory care including surgery, diagnostics, and imaging, and other outpatient services," said Uffelmann. "We expect annual visits in Bracebridge will increase from 60,000 a year to 140,000 per year."

The Bracebridge Emergency Department will grow from 11 bays to 27.

Huntsville's new hospital will have an increase of 34 beds for patients. By increasing their intensive care unit, they hope to reduce the need to send patients to Orillia, Barrie, and the GTA.

Uffelmann noted the Huntsville site has recently benefited from their new MRI equipment, partly supported by donors from Algonquin Highlands.

"Huntsville site will focus on rehabilitation and reactivation services," said Uffelmann.

He noted that many hospital visitors decline in health during their stay. One of the hospitals will focus on rehabilitation to help people return home.

Uffelmann offered AH council the opportunity for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to conduct a public session with the local community. He also noted that the catchment area for the hospitals has not factored the seasonal residents of Algonquin Highlands.

After the healthcare organization spoke with local and seasonal residents, it is clear that many choose to go to the hospital in Huntsville over Haliburton or Barry's Bay.

He says that those living in Dorset, Kawagama Lake, and near the Highway 60 corridor will choose Huntsville's hospital in an emergency.

After their presentation, Algonquin Highlands Mayor Liz Danielsen thanked them for their presentation and congratulating them on their success with the project.

"We do have a challenge because we are supporting a health system in Haliburton County that is also used by the City of Kawartha Lakes," said Danielsen.

She says that they have not had the same level of success when it comes to the county's health system. Despite numerous visitors from Kawartha Lakes, local sites have not received additional funding provincially.

Danielsen said they would consider their requests during their budget considerations in the near future, but could not commit beyond that point.

"My son was saved at Huntsville hospital and I want to thank you for that," said Deputy Mayor Dailloux. "We confirm the truth in what you say, that the people in the most northern part of our township rely on the Huntsville hospital."

Dailloux said she supports taking the consideration to both budget and county. With most of Algonquin Highlands residents' tax dollars contributing towards the hospitals within the county, it should be discussed with the county.

Danielsen asked the presenters what their plan is to recruit doctors to the new hospitals.

Harrison says that they have been successful with a community recruiter. They also have a relationship with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and are in talks to form a relationship with York University's planned medical program.

"Most of the physicians that have learned in the Muskoka area want to stay here after they have graduated," said Harrison.

‘It stinks’: Locals blast Beer Store closure

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

Haliburton residents blasted the announced closure of the local Beer Store last week after it served the community for nearly 50 years.

“It stinks,” Linda Heeps simply said. “They’re losing their job, and who’s going to take the refunds?”

The Beer Store confirmed to this paper on November 13 that the Hops Drive location will shutter on January 11.

“I don’t understand the rationale,” Heeps said.

The Haliburton location is one of the more than 120 stores to close since Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced his government’s alcohol expansion program that allows grocery stores and gas stations to sell booze.

“I think it’s a shame that that is happening,” Roger Dart said. “I’m just surprised they’re closing all these stores because the convenience stores can’t pick up; they just can’t do what the other beer stores have done over the years.”

Some residents raised concerns about what’s going to happen with the return of empties and obtaining their deposit back.

“My concern with The Beer Store closing down is where are we going to be taking our empties back to?” John Currie said. “That concerns me and, you know, the employees losing their jobs.”

As of January 1, all grocery stores that sell alcohol will be required to accept the return of empties and refund customer deposits. Variety stores and gas stations that sell booze are not required to accept empties.

Local resident Rennie Bonfield suggested that all stores that sell booze should be forced to accept empties and refund deposits.

“Everybody now has a piece of their finger in the pie, but nobody’s coming forward to take responsibility for this,” he said. “Even the convenience store should also. If you’ve got a hand in this or a stake in it, then that’s what you need to do. Step up.”

Dysart et al Mayor Murray Fearrey called the closure of The Beer Store “disappointing.”

“However, it had been rumoured for some time, loss of employment and convenience to customers are top of mind,” he said in an email last week. “Certainly, customer choice will be more limited, and grocery stores will struggle with can and bottle returns.”

On November 14, UFCW Canada Local 12R24, the union that represents The Beer Store workers, slammed the closure of the Haliburton store and warned that beer prices will likely go up.

“It’s a horrible situation all around,” union president John Nock said in a telephone interview.

“We’re losing lots of jobs, and nobody is saving the jobs. They’re not hiring them in convenience stores, and they’re not hiring them in grocery stores.

“Prices are going to go up, and places to bring your empties are slowly diminishing,” he said.

As for being able to return empties to Haliburton’s only two grocery stores, it remains unclear. Brad Park of Foodland and Steve Todd of Todd’s Your Independent Grocer were both unavailable for comment last week due to some personal time away from work.

This is a developing story. This newspaper will have ongoing coverage of The Beer Store closure.

Calling all elves!

Once again, the Haliburton Echo and Minden Times will be showcasing the elves of the community. Do you have an Elf on the Shelf who has returned this year? One thing we know for sure is that these elves love to see themselves in the newspaper!

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Staff from the Noble Barber tried their hands at cookie decorating this past week.

Our own team from the *Haliburton Echo* and the *Minden Times* were invited to decorate cookies for the cause. Pictured, Thomas Smith, Adam Frisk, and Emily Stonehouse. /photos submitted

Smile Campaign continues to give back

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Smile! The Tim Hortons Holiday Smile Cookies were back in the community last week, where thousands of the festive treats were shared across the county.

Between Nov. 17 to 23, both the Minden and Haliburton Tim Hortons locations opened their doors to community partners and organizations to assist in decorating Smile Cookies. During the week, 100 per cent of the proceeds from the cookies were split between the Haliburton 4Cs Food Bank, the Minden Community Food Centre, and Tim Hortons Foundation Camps.

Approximately 30 local businesses partook in the decorating, each signing up for a time slot during the busy holiday week. "It means a lot to us," said Paige Chapman, the owner of the local location. "Everyone is so kind." In total, the campaign raised $13,570 over the course of the week, which translates to 6785 cookies sold. During the last holiday campaign, the local organizers raised $10,906.

For Chapman, Tim Hortons runs in her blood. She has been decorating cookies for as long as she can remember, with her dad running a Tim Hortons on the East Coast. Some of her earliest memories are decorating holiday cookies, and while she has worked her way through all the positions at Tim Hortons, including the owner of the local establishments for nearly one year, she always welcomes an opportunity to go back to her roots.

"This has been so fun," she said. "We're not from a small town, so it's been really cool to see people come together."

With local food banks hitting their season where need is at an all-time high, Chapman and her partner in business and in life, Mike Garland, made the decision to contribute the funds from the cookies right back into the community. While the summer cookie campaign focuses on sending kids to camp, the holiday cookie session allows for the opportunity to split up the funds raised with local charities in need. "By purchasing Holiday Smile Cookies at Tim Hortons in Haliburton and Minden, you are helping local families facing food insecurity," said Chapman. "It's one small act that creates a big impact."

"It's a sweet way to give back, and every cookie purchased helps ensure that families in our community have access to nourishing food during a time of growing need," said Jean Munroe, the manager for the Minden Community Food Centre. "Over the past three months, demand for our food bank has more than doubled, and food costs have soared beyond anything we've seen before. We're doing everything we can to keep shelves stocked and meals flowing, but we can't do it alone."

Munroe noted that she is seeing a dramatic increase in local job losses and a massive spike in food prices; all exacerbated by the holiday season." We're deeply grateful to Tim Hortons and to every community member who chooses to support us, one cookie at a time," said Munroe. "This cookie campaign is more than a fundraiser - it's a lifeline, and there is no better time to help than now."

The Haliburton County Huskies visited the Minden Tim Hortons location to decorate some festive treats. /submitted

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HSF fills their Canadian cup

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Now more than ever, the importance of celebrating Canadian content seems to be on the forefront.

That's why, when the board with the Highlands Summer Festival (HSF) were tasked with coming up with a new lineup for the next season, they gravitated to Canadian themes.

"Canada is absolutely brimming with talent and creativity," said Douglas Walker, the artistic director for HSF. "And I feel like we are in a time where it is more important than ever to celebrate this."

On Monday, Nov. 24, HSF officially announced the lineup for their 2026 season. And yes, it is all 100 per cent made in Canada. "I firmly believe this season has something for everyone," said Walker. "Also in a slight change to previous seasons, with our in-house productions we are offering three comedies. In years gone by we have had comedies and dramas, but with everything that is happening in the world I feel we could use a bit more laughter. So if you love to laugh, this season is definitely for you."

The season will kick off with the beloved *Anne of Green Gables, the musical*. A classic Canadian story about a young girl from Prince Edward Island, following her journey of growing up, finding family, and transforming the lives of those around her through her spirited nature and her love for life. Some would recall that this production was put on a few years ago by HSF, but it was met with such warmth and support that the board made the decision to put a new spin on it for the next generation of Anne lovers.

Following *Anne of Green Gables,* there will be Norm Foster's *Doris and Ivy In The Home*. Set in Alberta, it follows the story of two very different women: a retired prison guard and a former world champion skier. It includes stories of love, life, gossip and even a romp behind the compost heap. "Norm Foster at his comedic best," chuckled Walker.

The third offering is the first of the brought-in shows: *Yo And My Shadow* by Fabian Arciniegas. Arciniegas - a singer and talented storyteller - invites audiences on a journey through migration, self doubt, and reconciliation with his "Shadow"; taking the audience on a journey blending monologue, music, movement, and sharp wit.

Following the one-man show, HSF will offer their last in-house produced show: *Too Many Cooks* by Marcia Cash and Douglas E. Hughes. Based in Niagara Falls in 1932, rum running is at its peak. Irving Bubbalowe and his daughter, Honey, are opening a new gourmet restaurant with star singing chef François LaPlouffe. However, when LaPlouffe fails to appear, unemployed chef Frank Plunkett arrives looking for work. Meanwhile, Chicago gangsters arrive, looking for an illegal shipment of booze in the restaurant basement, trailed by a hot-blooded immigration officer and a suspicious tee-total Mountie. "Needless to say chaos ensues and we get to see farce at its finest," said Walker.

Closing out the 2026 season, and back by popular demand, are Leisa Way and the Wayward Wind Band. "Leisa and her band are no strangers to Haliburton," said Walker. "An amazing Canadian band that can turn their hand to any genre of music will be back here to give us a wonderful musical experience with great warmth and humour."

With Walker stepping in for his second season as the artistic director, the Canadian-made theme plays a part near and dear to his heart. "On a more personal note, originally being from Scotland, this season will mark the 10 year anniversary of me being in Canada," he said "Love of a Canadian brought me here, and Canadian theatre made me love this place even more."

Tickets for this stacked lineup can officially be purchased as of this week, and the board suggests season passes as holiday gifts for those interested. Tickets can be purchased at www.highlandssummerfestival.on.ca. "All of our shows are made in Canada, our in-house stories span three provinces," said Walker. "In short, Canada is awesome."

HHSS Junior Boys volleyball team captures silver at COSSA

The Red Hawk Junior Boys Volleyball team had a season to remember. During their league tournaments, the Red Hawks were competitive with all teams including much larger AA and AAA schools. Facing tough competition each week made the team work harder and develop better skills leading them into the Kawartha Championship tournament seeded first. On Nov. 6 at Kenner Collegiate in Peterborough, they dominated St. Thomas, crowning them Kawartha Champions and bringing home the coveted Kawartha trophy. At the COSSA Championships, at St. Thomas Aquinas in Lindsay on Nov. 13, they squared off against Nicholson Catholic College from Belleville in the first semifinal. Despite losing the first set, the boys clawed their way back to win three sets sending them to the COSSA finals. Coming up against a talented Quinte Christian High School team, the team played well but fell losing in three tight sets. This marks the first time in HHSS history that a junior boys volleyball team has captured a medal at COSSA.

Congratulations to all team members: Lincoln Brown, Gideon Borgdorff, Duncan Evans-Fockler, Will Gallant, Luke Gruppe, Ross Gordon, Jadyn Hamilton, Parker Holden, Levi Joseph, Hudson Meyer, Travis Rowe, Matt Scheffee, Jack Tomlinson and Jett Wilson.

Coaches: Brett Caputo, Janice Scheffee

Submitted

Pictured, the Junior Boys Volleyball team with their COSSA trophy. /submitted

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CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER AWARD 2018

Published by **White Pine Media Corp**

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Print Subscriptions 1 yr/ $51 (taxes included). Published weekly by White Pine Media
To Subscribe to the Print or Digital edition, email subscriptions@haliburtonpress.com or call 705-457-1037.

The Canadian way

Editorial

Emily Stonehouse

OVER THE past few months, the differences between countries have stood out like a sore thumb.

Constant comparisons, dichotomizations, polar opposites seen in real time.

We see this in the form of upper-level leadership; the actions of people in power leaving us baffled and numb, our brains not designed to understand how the universe has allowed this to happen. The good guys always win? Right? Right?!

As my team and I decorated Tim Hortons Christmas cookies this past week as a part of their holiday campaign, the roots to Canadian pride started to take hold.

And yes, I know Tim Hortons is no longer a Canadian company. And it is important to connect the dots and trace where the funds trickle down from.

But the owners of our local Tim Hortons are very Canadian. Paige Chapman has memories of decorating Christmas cookies as early as nine-years-old, when her dad, also a store owner, would bring her into work. She worked her way up in the franchise, and is deeply committed to the organization, and the community she is now tied to.

There was a certain Canadian joy to that.

This past week, Prime Minister Mark Carney narrowly had his budget passed in a confidence vote, avoiding yet another election (I think we're all a bit tired of those these days …)

And while the Liberal Government may not be everyone's cup of tea, we can't deny that we're on relatively stable ground compared to our neighbouring country.

People often forget that the issues that are near and dear to home actually do not have a blue or a red flag attached to them. Concerns around shorelines, around road maintenance, around firefighting and police management and immediate taxations, those all happen at a municipal level.

Our community neighbours are the ones we need to be looking at. Running for council is no small feat, and we only hope it is done with passion and pride for the community that has raised us.

I felt that pride while I (fairly poorly) decorated those holiday cookies. Tim Hortons invited a number of local organizations and community leaders to add little icing smiley faces for the cause. All proceeds from the cookies for the week went directly into the community. To camps, to food banks, to organizations that give back. Jean Munroe from the Minden Community Food Centre referred to the cookies as "a lifeline" during a time of major food security crisis.

The need has more than doubled, she said. Higher food prices, higher rent, higher cost of living. And minimum wages just not keeping up. We can point the fingers at all levels of government for those gaps that seem to keep appearing; gaping holes in the landscape of life.

But while we dwell and drudge through the challenges of life, I think there is value in seeing the goodness in the world, as well. The relative stability, the peace, the community camaraderie that floats to the surface this time of year, every year. This season has a way of showcasing the highs and the lows through a fluorescent light; the boldness and brashness of both exposed for all to see.

And there is dirt under the nails of many who call this country home. Skeletons in the closet and monsters under the bed.

But through it all, there are also cookies. And a community that shows up to add a little icing on a dreary November day.

And that, to me, is the Canadian way.

On games

Technology

Humans & Erin Kernohan-Berning

JUST ABOUT every Sunday at 6 p.m. I sit at my computer for two hours and play Dungeons and Dragons online with a group of friends. This is a group of friends that I know IRL (in real life), but because of geography and time constraints, meeting in person with any frequency beyond sporadic is impossible. Instead, online tools like Discord (which supports voice chat) and Roll20 (which provides a virtual tabletop) have allowed us to meet weekly to engage in some imaginative storytelling for going on nine years now. Well, at least when the obligations of adult life haven't gotten in the way of our fun.

Games are very much a central part of the human experience. Games can be found in just about every human culture dating back thousands of years. Dice, card, and board games (among other forms of games) have been key features of leisure time for generations. They have served as a way to keep minds active and facilitate social interaction.

Video games, a technological evolution of gaming that came about with the computer, are another popular form of games. The first video games were created in the 1950s and 1960s but became more widely accessible with the creation of arcade games in the 1970s closely followed by video game consoles (such as those by Magnavox and Atari).

As long as games have been prevalent, they have also been the subject of moral panic. Card games were often targeted by religious movements, such as when they were banned in 1382 in Barcelona, and in 1750 by Pope Benedict XIV. This was largely due to playing cards' association with gambling, an activity frowned upon by the church. It was thought that those who played cards would fall into the clutches of gambling and become destitute.

Likewise, video games have had their own brushes with moral panic. The visual and interactive components of video games, along with the subject matter of certain game genres such as first-person shooters, have led to fears of video games causing violent behaviour. However, much like card playing and gambling, the association between video games and violence is far from inevitable.

The American Psychological Association (APA) stated in a 2020 resolution that: "Attributing violence to violent video gaming is not scientifically sound and draws attention away from other factors." However, they acknowledged that in certain circumstances violent video games may increase aggressive behaviour. To give some perspective, the APA also released a literature review showing that in certain contexts, youth involvement in sports was also associated with increased aggressive behaviour. In both cases, the APA recommendation included further study and examining mechanisms to decrease the effect of the activity on the behaviour – not an outright ban on these activities.

In a study led by neuroscientist Adrian Owen (Western University), in a sample of 1,000 people, it was found that, "Playing video games was associated with improved cognitive abilities but not better or worse mental health, whereas more physical activity was associated with improved mental health but not better or worse cognitive health." The study's purpose was to examine the effect of lifestyle on the long-term health of our brains. In this case, the results indicate that gaming and physical activity can have beneficial effects on our wellbeing in different ways. The lesson here, I think, is not that gaming is uniquely bad or good, but – like any activity – can be beneficial when practiced in moderation and not to the exclusion of other beneficial behaviours.

Video games can also be art forms in their own right. They can engage the player in an interactive story that can be emotionally impactful, showcase the work of skillful artists and animators, and challenge the mind through the puzzles and riddles. There are also many video games that have minimal or no violence at all. In *What Remains of Edith Finch* you explore an old home and try to solve the mysteries around the tragedy that befell the family that lived there, slowly unravelling the story of their fate. In *Oxenfree* a group of friends visit a rocky forested island where they wind up unleashing a supernatural force and through dialogue and puzzles you have to figure out how to stop it. I enjoyed playing both of these games, among many others that lean heavily into storytelling.

Games, including video games, can be an enriching part of life. The effective but boring advice (that doesn't sell books or get on the network television infotainment circuit) is that moderation is what's important. It's possible to become too engrossed in just about any activity to such an extent that it causes harm. Blaming video games, or any technology, for our society's ills doesn't solve any problems – it just creates a convenient scapegoat. Scapegoats steal our focus away from real solutions while the circumstances still creating the problems remain.

points of view

Lines of communication

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

I HAVE always believed that the key to a good relationship is an open and honest line of communication – and not just when mumbling to yourself either.

That's why, after I got my old walkie-talkies out the other week, I loaded them up with fresh batteries and placed one on Jenn's bedside table and the other on mine.

Not to brag, but this worked immediately.

You see, when Jenn saw them and looked at me like I had a hole in my head, she then said, "Do you plan on annoying me with these?"

I think we can all agree, it doesn't get much more open and honest than that.

"Actually, it's 'Do you plan on annoying me with these?' Over … " I corrected.

Jenn seemed a little reluctant to participate in this communication exercise, as evidenced by the fact that she tried hiding in the closet. Yet, the very fact that she did this without letting me know, was further proof that our communication was not as it should be. Which I promptly pointed out on channel one.

It took a few minutes of instruction but soon Jenn had resigned herself to utilizing the hand-held radios in a non-weapony sort of way.

"Why are we doing this, over," she said, as she looked me in the eyes.

"Because, when two people talk on handheld radios, only one person talks and the other has to listen, over," I explained.

That revelation even surprised me, so much so, that I cut in again and said, "We should take these to a marriage counselor, over."

"Oh yes, we should … over," she snapped.

I won't go on about the rest of our conversation. Some swear words are best kept within the confines of a loving relationship. But I will say that after a while, Jenn finally understood why I decided to do this.

"You didn't get enough attention as a kid, right? Over," she said.

"Are you kidding? I had these things! Over."

"Well then, are you upset that you never got to be a radio operator in your youth when you were in the militia? Over."

"Not at all. No one wants to be a radio operator in the military. They are the first ones to get shot at, over."

"I can totally understand that, over," she replied.

Before long, those radios were causing us to have what Jenn referred to as, "an uncomfortable conversation," which is – according to what I heard on social media from a 19-year-old couple describing the key to the longevity of their relationship – the kind of conversation every couple should have every now and then.

Jenn, it turned out, was particularly adept at confronting me with the hard questions. Such as, "Ever since that typo in which your autocorrect turned the word faces into feces, you have been afraid to text. Am I right? Over."

"I meant to say that I was surrounded by a bunch of sour faces … Over," I answered.

"I know you did, over," she said and then laughed.

"You know this is the highly impersonal way people used to communicate before texting made the walkie-talkies obsolete, over," I said.

"No, it wasn't, over," she replied.

"Well, it should have been, over."

"You're right. I think we should carry these all the time," she said. "That way, when I need you to do a chore, I can get you immediately. Right now, I need you to …"

It turns out walkie-talkies are not that reliable. Mine accidentally got switched to channel two.

pic of the past

This photo was submitted by Dennis Loucks. It's from Lutterworth school, five kilometres south of Minden on Highway 35. The teacher was Marlene Black. The plaque says it was taken in 1962.

Cold feet

Our road Down

Sharon Lynch

DAVE HAD never done this before and he wasn't sure it was a good idea. Marching down the middle of the street while a crowd of strangers watched him was not how he wanted to spend the evening. Sure it was the Santa Claus parade and he probably knew many of the faces crowding the sidewalk but to be honest he'd rather be at home with a hot drink.

Amy had suggested potential new club members would be impressed. Once they saw the club was a fun bunch willing to dress up in a sub-zero snow storm and smile as their skin turned to stone, well what could be more inspiring, enticing and just plain fun? Dave had not been convinced.

Now the snow was thick and heavy, assaulting his eyes as he and Jake struggled with a string of lights. It was looped around Amy's gigantic paper mache ornament installed on a flatbed. The parade captain continued repeating instructions on how and when to move down the street and what to expect from the crowd. Jake was cursing under his breath at the lights as Dave struggled to make out what the other man was saying. "How difficult could all this be?" he asked himself, blinking away the snowflakes.

The other marchers seemed much more seasoned paraders. They scurried around their floats doing last minute adjustments or stood calmly chatting amongst themselves. Christmas music floated on the night air and somewhere in the sky, now hidden behind a sheet of white, Dave knew there was a moon and stars sparkled.

Now they had started to move. Bunched up at the front of the line, they pushed forward, settling into the right pace as they rounded the corner and onto the main street. A sea of clothing stood waiting and watching from the sidelines as the intrepid merry-makers began their trek through the town.

Dave and his bunch were behind the festive horses. Decked out in elf hats with red and green lights circling their long necks, the animals pranced forward, apparently not spooked by all the noise and activity surrounding them. Dave hoped he could stay as calm. He had lost all feeling in his feet, his cheeks ached with the cold and he almost stumbled through a pile of droppings left by the palomino ahead of them.

Then he saw the children. They stood in front of the adults and the cold did not appear to bother them at all, transfixed as they were by what they saw. Here and there a small mittened hand pointed at a float, a clown or someone they recognized. Tossed candy flew through the air where the older kids scrambled after it like birds under a feeder. Parents and grandparents grinned at the excitement even as they stamped their feet in futile pursuit of circulation.

Dave's mood shifted. The children reminded him he had once been like them – mesmerized by the season and the mystery that accompanied it. He too had once believed in magic.

letters to the editor

A correction to P4P history

To the Editor,

Thank you for your lovely coverage of the P4P AGM that was also my swan song. I need to correct one historical detail. I came to Haliburton County in 1997 to found what is now Point in Time (it was called Family Services at that time), pulling together under one roof provincially-funded children's programs that had been offered by three different agencies. I remained in that role for ten years. In the last two of those years, I used agency aegis to conduct the community consultation that culminated in the Places for People model being adopted. Immediately upon leaving Point in Time, I focused on making P4P happen.

Fay Martin,
Minden

Kudos to ATAC

To the Editor

Aging Together as Community (ATAC) held a (very) sold-out fund raising/information session/luncheon/celebration this past Sunday afternoon at the Haliburton Legion. The ATAC committee didn't miss a thing ... a lively room of enthusiastic supporters, a variety of delicious chilis and desserts donated by a number of very generous local restaurants and businesses, some terrific entertainment and a powerful and moving address by Dr. Nell Thomas. What a remarkable sense of how strong, vibrant and progressive our community is! The guests also included three councillors from the Township of Minden Hills. Their interest in and support of the event was very clearly noted and appreciated by those in attendance. Bravo ATAC!

Sean Pennylegion,
Haliburton

Fast Lane Afternoon Bowling League

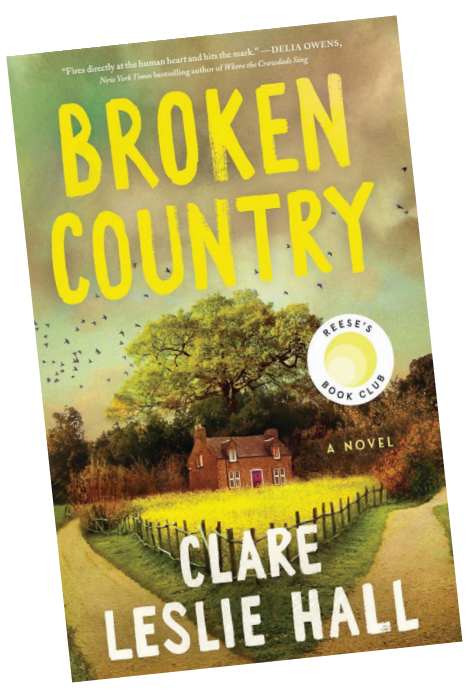
The Fast Lane Top Bowling Scores
November 17
Women
High Single
Cathy Snell 259
High Single with Handicap
Cathy Snell 272
High Triple
Cathy Snell 650
High Triple with Handicap
Cathy Snell 689
Men
High Single
Marty Schuster 305
High Single with Handicap
Marty Schuster 352
High Triple
Marty Schuster 768
High Triple with Handicap
Marty Schuster 909
New bowlers are welcome to join!

Minden Memories

Victor Hollefreund, John Hulbig's mother's nephew, poses proudly with a partridge, believed to date from the turn of the century. The Hollefreund family operated a general store on Invergordon Avenue at the time. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre.

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week


"Fires directly at the human heart and hits the mark." —DELIA OWENS,
BROKEN COUNTRY
REESE'S BOOK CLUB
A NOVEL
CLARE LESLIE HALL

Beth and her husband Frank share a quiet, happy life built on the unspoken agreement to leave the past behind. But when Beth's brother-in-law shoots a dog attacking their sheep, the incident sets off a chain of events neither could foresee. The dog belongs to Gabriel Wolfe, the man who broke Beth's heart decades ago and has now returned to the village with his young son - a boy who reminds her of the child she lost. As old feelings resurface and tensions in the village grow, long-buried secrets threaten to unravel everything. Beth is forced to make a choice between the woman she once was, and the woman she has become.

Broken Country by Clare Leslie Hall is available at the Haliburton County Public Library as a book or Book Club Set. Visit haliburtonlibrary.ca to place a hold or learn more.

Ctrl-Art-Del searching for next star

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Local theatre company Ctrl-Art-Del is looking for actors to audition for the upcoming theatre season.

Celebrating their fourth season, the company will have four plays in their 2026 season.

The first play of their 2026 season is *Punch Up* by Canadian playwright Kat Sandler.

The second play written by Sandler performed by Ctrl-Art-Del, "Punch Up" is a comedy about three misfits.

"Brenda is the saddest girl in the world, Pat is the world's funniest man, and Duncan is a loser," said Ella Leis, production manager of Ctrl-Art-Del.

With Brenda conflicted by suicidal ideation, Duncan and Brenda make a deal that if he can make her laugh she will reevaluate her outlook on life. To do so, Duncan kidnapped his second favourite comedian, Pat, and tries to convince Pat to make him funny.

"It is hilarious, a really good time," said Leis.

Punch Up will be performed in April at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion.

The Welkin is a courtroom drama set in rural England in the 1700s. A young woman, set to be hanged, says that she is pregnant. A team of 12 women must try to find out if she is telling the truth.

The Welkin by Lucy Kirkwood features 13 women on stage throughout the show. With such a large casting size there are characters for any age group.

"It has themes of female bodily autonomy and the rights to make decisions about your own body," said Leis. "It is funny, I swear."

Using contemporary language, Leis says that *The Welkin* is highly topical, especially with Adriana Smith's pregnancy case making the news this year. Smith, a nurse from Georgia, was kept alive after being pronounced brain dead. The hospital detected a fetal heartbeat, leading to the medical team being forced to keep her alive before the baby was born.

Leis says a recurring theme of the play is the invisible labours of women. Connecting to Haliburton County, Leis says that there is still a great amount of unsung labour from women.

"There are many characters in this play that I feel I know in women in Haliburton County," said Leis. "More and more rights are being actively stripped away."

The Welkin will be performed in August at the Haliburton Highlands Museum.

Duecentomila by Canadian playwright kai figg tadei is about cousins that connect their experience with their queer identity. Living in Italy, Eli struggles to come out to his Roman Catholic Family as trans. His Canadian cousin Kat is desperate for a connection to a culture and place she has never known. When Kat starts a crowdfunding campaign to bring Eli to Toronto's Pride celebrations, she outs him to his family.

"It's about figuring out what traditions you want to hang on to, what to let go of, what is holding you back, and how to be comfortable in your own skin," said Leis.

> ***"We are starting to see youth who started with us at 14 and are coming back to take on larger roles."***
>
> — Ella Leis, production manger, Ctrl–Art–Del

The character of Eli will be played by a trans or non-binary actor specifically. There are three other roles to be cast.

"Look around this high school, there are a lot of trans and non-binary youth living and trying to survive in this county," said Leis.

Produced in collaboration with Pride in the Highlands, *Duecentomila* will be performed as a stage reading in August.

"One of the things that Pride in the Highlands wants to do is find a space for young, queer folks in town," said Leis. "It would be good for the older participants to meet the youth that are growing up after them."

The final show of their 2026 season, *Mary's Wedding*, is a play about a man and woman who fall in love before he is sent to fight in World War I.

"It is a play told throughout time, a memory play," said Leis. "It is their love story combined with the traumas of war."

Leis says that the character Charlie is accurately represented as a young soldier. Boy like and anxious, he is scared to fight in war.

"I feel like that is something that doesn't get written in war stories," said Leis. "I think it is a particularly touching show."

Leis says that in the four years of operation Ctrl-Art-Del the theatre company has seen growth. Their goal is to involve local young people through theatre.

"We have a 17 year old assistant to the artistic director, which is a lot of fun," said Leis. "We are starting to see youth who started with us at 14 and are coming back to take on larger roles."

Auditions for their 2026 season will be taking place at the Haliburton Legion on Dec. 6 and 7. Audition time slots can be reserved on ctrlartdel.ca. Information about auditioning will also be regularly posted on their social media sites.

"We are happiest when people come into the room and be themselves," said Leis.

If you have any questions, you can email their team at info@ctrlartdel.ca.

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Get your wands out for *Puffs*

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Students in the HHSS Drama Club rehearse for "Puffs" which will be performed from Dec. 12 to 14 at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Everyone knows a certain famous school of magic and wizarding. Yes, that one in Scotland with all the different Houses.

Matt Cox's *Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic* is currently being rehearsed by Haliburton Highlands Secondary School's Drama Club. The play focuses on the Puffs' house and the misfits that are sorted into their midst. Other houses include the Braves, Snakes, and Smarts.

Christine Carr, teacher supervisor for the Drama Club says that the story is a wonderful twist on a story that everyone knows.

"It's okay to be normal, it's okay to be yourself, and it's okay to find what you love and celebrate that," said Carr.

With a lot of *Harry Potter* fans making up the cast, the play was the perfect choice for the high school.

As the Puff house is full of misfits, Carr says that the youth in the HHSS Drama Club feel that they can identify with those in the play.

Auditions and rehearsals for the show started in September. Every element of the show is student-led. With a huge number of props, crew members have made 99 per cent of them. The cast has even made their own wands for the production.

Christina Weerdenburg, a student actor who plays the narrator, says that the show is about the Puffs (who don't get much representation in the movies) and their silly nature.

Weerdenburg says that it has been a lot of fun to work on getting into the mindset of the narrator.

"Getting into this play makes me want to read the books," said Weerdenburg.

Spencer Zumpano, who plays Wayne Hopkins, says that he was born to play Wayne.

"He is my spirit animal," said Zumpano.

"Sometimes it's hard to stay after school and do something but as soon as you get into the theatre and rehearse with everyone, it is a lot of fun," said Weerdenburg.

Full of references to the original source material, *Puffs* is a fun show full of jokes.

"It is very funny, if you like funny stuff, you're probably gonna like the play," said Zumpano.

"It also has a lot of meaning behind it," said Weerdenburg. "Like searching for yourself and your group of people."

Puffs will be performed at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion from Dec. 12 to 14. Visitors are encouraged to wear their costumes to connect themselves into the wizarding world.

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Hal High hockey returns to the ice

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Hockey and Haliburton are synonymous. It's part of our culture, part of our heritage.

Many people who grew up here recall playing hockey on the Haliburton Highlands Secondary School (HHSS) teams. Games were attended by community members; the bleachers filled with roaring applause and bristol board signs, cheering the local kids on.

But like many things, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, high school hockey was benched. It needed to be. The logistics were complicated, the shared spaces presenting too much overlap.

But the local Red Hawks are ready to fly again. "Things in this school, things in the community, they're back on the upswing," said high school teacher and head coach of the hockey team, Jason Morissette.

Morissette grew up in Haliburton. He went to Hal High himself, played all levels of hockey while calling the community home. He raised a family here, moved on to coaching his own kids, and has now been given an opportunity to bring the sport back to the high school. "They're excited," said Morissette, referencing the 21 boys who have made the team. "To be able to do something that's just fun and connects them with their school. We're going to see how we do, but we're mostly doing it just to have some fun."

While all the players have some experience with the sport, Morissette noted that their levels vary. The ages range from Grade 9 to Grade 12, which presents a unique opportunity for the students to step into leadership roles, both on and off the ice.

While the students all have hockey experience, out of the 21 players, 15 have never played a school team sport before.

"They're becoming student athletes," said Morissette. "They have to follow our credo: respect, commitment, and responsibility." He noted that the opportunity to play a team sport in the community comes with a wealth of experiences unto itself. "They're off campus," he said, noting that they are playing in the Haliburton arena, as well as visiting other sites across the region. "They're going to learn how to be a part of that community."

Morissette shared that while there are a wealth of other sports available through the high school, the hockey team is the only one where contact is allowed. "There are many student athletes that excel at contact team sports activities," he said, "and that's something that some students are missing at HHSS as a possible playing opportunity."

With Morissette as the head coach, he's brought on Hal High alumni Nick Kulas as the community coach, Clay Glecoff as the goalie coach, Ray Rietvelt as the trainer, and Laura Kulas as the team's manager. Principal of the school, Jennifer Mills, has also been incredibly supportive in getting the team going.

Morissette noted the tremendous community support the organization has received so far. "We would not have gotten off the ground without the community," he said. While the school funds a portion of the costs around the sport, the team has also received sponsorships and alumni support, which assists in offsetting costs for the students. "That's what I love about Hal High, that's what I love about Haliburton County," said Morissette. "We want to see other people have these opportunities."

According to a recent Harvard study, three in four (77 per cent) of adults over the age of 30 who play sports today, started out playing sports as school-aged children. Only three per cent of adults who play sports currently did not play when they were young.

And with this lifelong interest starting at school age, Morissette believes the students will develop foundational skills they can carry through their lives. "It helps with connecting, it helps with behaviour, it gives them pride in their school," he said. "And it's all about having fun. That's why we're doing this."

Hal High will be playing their first local game on Thursday, Nov. 27 at 2 p.m. in Haliburton against I.E. Weldon. All are welcome to cheer on the team, with an ask for a voluntary donation or food item to local food banks as an entry fee.

BOYS VARSITY HOCKEY TEAM
REGULAR SEASON 2025-26

Thurs. Nov. 27th	HOME OPENER vs IE Weldon SS @ 2 p.m.
Wed. Dec. 3rd	vs LCVI at Lindsay @ 1 p.m.
Thurs. Dec. 4th	vs Adam Scott SS at HOME @ 2 p.m.
Thurs. Dec. 11th	vs Campbellford SS at HOME @ 2 p.m.
Tues. Dec. 16th	vs St Pete's at Healthy Planet @ 1:15 p.m.
Wed/Thurs. Jan 7/8	St Pete's Classic Tournament @ Peterborough
Mon. Jan. 12th	vs Holy Cross SS at Healthy Planet @ 2 p.m.
Thurs. Jan. 15th	vs TASS at HOME @ 2 p.m.
Thurs. Feb. 5th	vs FFSS at Fenlon Falls @ 3 p.m.
Thurs. Feb. 12th	vs CCI Cobourg at HOME @ 2 p.m.
Wed. Feb. 18th	vs Crestwood SS at Cavan @ 3 p.m.

Feb. 23rd – 26th Kawartha AA Playoffs for top four AA school Qualifying teams only after regular season play.

Home Game

VS

Sunday, Nov. 30 - 2 p.m.

Upcoming Home Games

Saturday, Dec. 6
4 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 18
7 p.m.

S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena

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Musical medleys

Students from Archie Stouffer Elementary School and students from Haliburton Highlands Secondary School came together to perform songs for Archie Stouffer students during recess on Wednesday, Nov. 19. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Stanhope holiday market spreads cheer

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

It takes a village and nearly a year of planning to prepare for the Stanhope Holiday Market.

The organizers of the market, Rebecca Wallace, Kenzie Merritt, Sarah Jowett, and Nicole Armstrong start planning for the holiday market in the spring. By summer, the organizers receive vendor applications to participate in Algonquin Highlands' largest holiday market of the year.

Merritt, a local artist and pyrographer of Happy Twigs creates the save the date cards and posters for advertising the market throughout the year.

"These cards really help to get the word out not only to local shoppers but seasonal residents as well," said Armstrong. "We also distribute the cards to our attending vendors to hand out during the Minden Farmers Market and drop off at local businesses."

Jowett arranges the radio advertisements for the market. All of the organizers frequently post about the market on social media to churn up interest.

If you have visited the Stanhope Holiday Market in the past, you are counting down the days until it returns.

With many markets taking place in Minden and Haliburton, the organizers noticed Stanhope's lack of a holiday market.

"There are many people who live on the outskirts of town so we find that Stanhope is the perfect spot to have our market," said Armstrong.

This year, there will be 24 local talented vendors, reaching full capacity for their space.

"We have an array of talented vendors who will be selling bead work, jewellery, paintings, clothing, candles, soaps, leather accessories, hats, mittens, stained glass and more," said Armstrong.

Best of all, the market is entirely free to visit.

Armstrong says that there are new artisans this year for customers to check out.

The market has everything you need for your holiday shopping. With the market taking place in late November, Christmas gifts are often at the forefront of people's minds.

Vending in the show also supports a good cause. Each vendor is asked to donate an item to raffle off at the show.

"One-hundred per cent of the proceeds is then donated to the Minden Community Food Centre," said Armstrong. "We would gladly accept donations to add to the additional money raised."

Armstrong says that that is what the holidays are about, giving back to others and enjoying the magic of Christmas with family and friends.

"Holiday markets are a wonderful way to connect the community with a great variety of local artists in one space," she said.

The Stanhope Holiday Market has had a fantastic turnout in the past years, which Armstrong hopes continues.

"Feedback from shoppers and our vendors is always positive and we appreciate the support for our small businesses from the community," she said. "We cannot wait to see everyone again this year."

Come visit the Stanhope Community Centre on Sunday, Nov. 30. A short jaunt from Minden, the community centre is located at 1095 North Shore Road in Stanhope. The space offers a chance to meet vendors and have a comfortable shopping experience.

"We are excited to see everyone who takes the time to come out to our market and hope that they find that special gift that they can enjoy or share with someone over the holiday season," said Armstrong.

County of Haliburton
Notice

Election of County Warden

The Council of the County of Haliburton wishes to provide PUBLIC NOTICE that the 2026 Warden's Election will take place on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 commencing at 2:00 p.m. in the County Administration Building located at 11 Newcastle Street in Minden. The public is welcome to attend.

Gary Dyke, CAO/Clerk
11 Newcastle Street, P. O. Box 399
Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0
Telephone: (705) 286-1333
or 1-866-886-8815, Ext. 223
E-mail: clerk@haliburtoncounty.ca

County of Haliburton
2026 Budget Deliberations

The Council of the County of Haliburton wishes to provide PUBLIC NOTICE that they will be discussing the 2026 budget at their regular scheduled Council meeting on Wednesday, December 10, 2026. The agenda for the above noted meeting date can be viewed online at http://haliburton.civicweb.net.

Gary Dyke, CAO/Clerk
11 Newcastle Street, P. O. Box 399
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or 1-866-886-8815, Ext. 223
E-mail: clerk@haliburtoncounty.ca

Old fire hall 'an eyesore' for Minden visitors

from page 1

falling apart are eyesores to visitors. New businesses cannot seem to survive in Minden, or are pushed out to other areas of Haliburton County.

"We have done new things, but not enough to replace what we have lost," said Schell. "Our biggest trouble is to have current businesses that are here, to stay open."

Councillor Tammy McKelvey noted that she despises the former fire hall as it remains in Minden. Her goal is to replace the decrepit site with a splash pad.

"The old fire hall is an eyesore," agreed Mauro.

Participants also noted the contrast between the Minden Farmers' Market and Haliburton Farmers' Market locations. Haliburton's Farmers' Market is located beside the beautiful Head Lake. Minden's Farmers' Market is located in a parking lot beside an abandoned fire hall. When wind comes, many vendors have to brace themselves and their goods from dirt flying up.

Councillor Pam Sayne noted that she has experienced issues with search engines pushing tourists towards Haliburton. Those searching Haliburton County are less likely to see things listed for Minden. She also noted that the tourism being based at the county level is a disservice to the municipalities in Haliburton County.

Later in the meeting, Mauro suggested finding a brand for Minden. Bala has cranberries, Creemore has beer, Minden needs its own niche to fill and become a draw for tourists.

Councillors agreed with the public participants that a Ribfest would be a great event for the community, but would need direction and the volunteers to make the event happen.

We need you to have your say about the future of Minden. Whether you are a resident or a business owner, MH council will benefit greatly from hearing ideas that can make changes in Minden for the better.

The next in-person consultation for their five year strategic plan, that will shape the future of Minden, will be taking place on Thursday Nov. 27 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

A new life for the old Rockcliffe

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

During the recent renovations at the Rockcliffe, the old stone wall of the original house became exposed. Current owner Jim Ecclestone hopes to incorporate the original wall into the new design. /THOMAS SMITH Staff

Minden residents have taken the time this week to notice the goings-on at the in-town Rockcliffe Hotel this week.

While it may seem scary to some, the current Rockcliffe owner, Jim Ecclestone confirms that this is all part of the plan.

Let's remind ourselves about the history of the 'World Famous Rockcliffe Hotel.'

The early beginnings of the Rockcliffe Hotel is shrouded in mystery. Some sources say that the building that is now the Rockcliffe Hotel was built in 1859, then burned in a fire.

In 1893, Thomas Ranson was hired to construct a building on the corner of Newcastle Street and Bobcaygeon Road. Fifteen years after building the structure, Ranson returned to live and operate his business within a hotel called the Ranson House Hotel.

Some sources say that Daniel Buck owned the building in the 1880s, but this has not been confirmed. It is possible that the Rockcliffe has been confused with the Dominion Hotel. Other sources say that Ranson built the Ranson House Hotel in 1908, but this is likely a confusion with Ranson opening his business.

On May 28, 1917, Thomas Ranson passed away.

By 1929, the Ranson House Hotel had changed hands and the hotel was renamed to the Valley View Inn.

By 1951, the Valley View Inn was renamed to the Rockcliffe Hotel

In 1959, Wilf and his wife Wynn Lahay and his sister Paulene became the caretakers of what was now known as the Rockcliffe Hotel. The Lahay family were the first owners to popularize bringing musical guests to the Rockcliffe.

Frank Mills, famous Canadian pianist, once had a two year contract to play at the Rockcliffe. The Lahays owned the Rockcliffe until 1971.

Bill O'Brien became the next owner and caretaker for the Rockcliffe. It was during the 1970s that the Rockcliffe became a tavern for music, drinking, and partying.

O'Brien was the first owner to sell the famous "I'm a Rockcliffe beer nut" t-shirts. While O'Brien sold the shirts, he says that Martin Myers of Calhoun Creations in St. Catherines is responsible for the idea.

A Minden newspaper from Aug. 30, 1978 reported that the Rockcliffe sold 15,000 t-shirts that year. Other offerings of shirts included "I'm a Rockcliffe foam blower" and "I'm a Rockcliffe lover."

The shirts themselves became famous across Canada and the rest of the world. Sale of the beer nut t-shirts were halted by the Liquor Control Board, but Rockcliffe branded merchandise continued to be a huge boon for the business. From drink cozies to underwear that said "I stole this from the Rockcliffe Hotel," the Rockcliffe capitalized on merchandise.

During its heyday, the Rockcliffe Hotel's clientele in the summer consisted heavily of local camp counsellors. Being young, with money in their pockets, and away from home, counsellors flocked to the Rockcliffe Hotel to drink, party, and unwind.

Minden had a healthy music scene in the 1970s, with Rush playing the Minden Arena in September of 1974. Stompin' Tom Connors played in Minden during the same decade, and after his show, he played in the Rockcliffe Hotel.

During the '70s, O'Brien began to hire strippers during the hunting season. Later owner, Dave Willis, continued this tradition.

In 1977, O'Brien sold the Rockcliffe to Dave Willis. Willis, with entrepreneurial drive, recognized the importance of merchandise to the Rockcliffe. After speaking to the Liquor Control Board about their merchandise, he was allowed to sell the "Rockcliffe University" t-shirts.

During the summers when they were the busiest, the owners charged entry to come into the Rockcliffe itself.

Willis saw potential in the space, closed its remaining rentable rooms and added its new sound system; the perfect space to make the Rockcliffe Hotel a party hub of Haliburton County.

It is worth noting that rumours flew about the Rockcliffe, including connections to Hell's Angels and mention of trafficking. All of these rumours Willis vehemently denies to this day.

Willis spent the longest time as owner of the Rockcliffe, from 1977 to 2010.

Sean and Mike Hooey purchased the Rockcliffe from Willis in 2010.

Mike Hooey had experience working with City-TV and later produced for Food channel and *Home and Garden Television* for 15 years. His son, Sean worked as the manager of the Rockcliffe and lived upstairs. The Hooeys continued to sell the Rockcliffe University t-shirts.

With a closure before the pandemic, the Rockcliffe fell into disrepair.

In 2020, Mark and Lise Dracup, Dan Gosselin, and Kirsty Goodearle teamed up to purchase the Rockcliffe. For three years, red tape and the looming need to overhaul the building weighed on the team. After Minden Hills opted to not sell part of the property for the team to do their renovations, the group sold the site. While waiting, the group opted to open a secondary Rockcliffe location in Moore Falls, which currently remains for sale.

These days, the latest owner of the Rockcliffe is Jim Ecclestone. Those who have ventured into town recently have seen that one of the eastern buildings has been partially demolished, exposing the old stone wall of the original farmhouse.

Two walls are remaining to be put up at the Rockliffe Hotel before winter hits, says Ecclestone.,

"We are hoping to keep that in," said Ecclestone, regarding the stone wall. "Whatever we do in the future."

After working to clean up the parking lot, Ecclestone hopes to have all refuse cleared out before Christmas.

Ecclestone says that his priorities are with his children at the moment. With pausing the renovations over the winter, he hopes to have the renovations completed next year.

Current Rockcliffe owner Jim Ecclestone says that he is working on cleaning up the Rockcliffe for the winter. Once some walls are up, construction will be put on hold until the new year.

"We are happy where we are at the moment," said Ecclestone.

Since joining the community, Ecclestone has become a dedicated supporter of the Minden Community Food Centre.

While no plans are certain, he has said that he hopes to rent the space out for local clubs in the future and for the community to make use of the iconic landmark once again.

Partnership Opportunity

TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS

Collection of Alcohol Containers at Township Waste Disposal Sites

The Township of Minden Hills is seeking interest from local service organizations who wish to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the Township for the collection of alcohol containers at a Waste Disposal Site.

The Township is interested in increasing resident access and participation in deposit return systems while providing opportunities to give back to the local community.

Interested organizations must be local and the proceeds must go towards benefiting the community.

Responsibilities of the Community Partner include:

- Regular pick up of containers, ensuring tidiness of collection site;
- Pay an annual administration fee of $200. These funds go towards the maintenance of the storage shed, signage, and maintaining the collection area;
- Provide annual reporting on total quantities collected.

When submitting notice of interest, organizations must provide a brief summary of their organization, where funds are being utilized in the community, and preference of Waste Disposal Site for the collection location.

The deadline to submit notice of interest is December 22, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

For more information please contact the Manager of Waste Facilities at 705-286-1260 ext. 572 or by email at waste@mindenhills.ca.

Please submit notice of interest to waste@mindenhills.ca

Not intended to solicit properties or clients currently listed

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- Easy access to the lot off County Road 21
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1110 SEDGWICK ROAD $930,000

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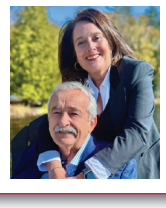
613 MOUNTAIN ST $395,000

Immaculate & Cozy 3 bedroom home in the Village of Haliburton. Main Fl Bedroom with 4 pc Bath, 2 upper level bedrooms with ensuite Bath. Spacious Kitchen/Dining Area with Walkout. Full Basement. Walk to town for all amenities.



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This custom built (2022) home offers serene privacy and breathtaking forest views. The warm, rustic interior features natural wood finishes. Expansive windows fill the space, inviting the outdoors in. Enjoy tranquil mornings on the deck, and peaceful evenings surrounded by the quiet beauty of nature in every season. Massive garage for a workshop with lots of parking for large vehicles. Just under 10 acres.

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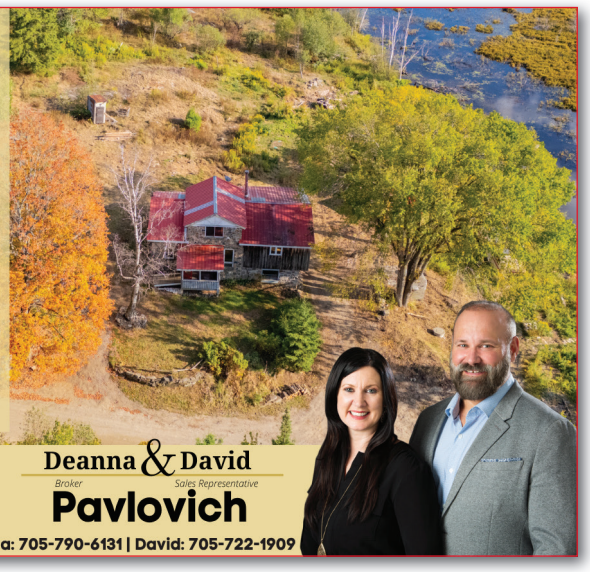

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10 MINUTES FROM HALIBURTON $519,000

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Sales Representative
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ted@tedvasey.ca

CUTE & COZY BUNGALOW $419,900

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* Partially Finished Lower Level
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GULL RIVER HOME $689,000

Meticulously maintained, this 4 bdrm year-round home sits on the beautiful Gull River & features a large yard with a waterside gazebo. The home boasts a fully finished basement with a separate entrance, a heat pump (with AC), woodstove, propane stove, central vacuum, separate laundry, & a backup generator. Enjoy excellent fishing & water fun with boat access to Gull Lake or up-river to the town dock or Rotary Park. A prime location at the South end of the County for quick access from the GTA.

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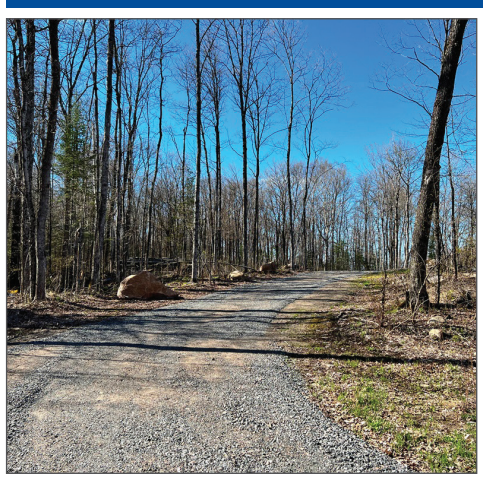

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Celebrate the chill, with the thrill of your next home. Contact a local realtor today!

Christmas in the County

Here comes Santa Claus

The Haliburton Lions Club and the Haliburton BIA drew a full crowd to the annual Santa Claus Parade last Friday. The one-hour evening parade had plenty of lights and festive cheer for everyone, and included a visit from Santa himself. /Adam Frisk staff

Jolly good time

Jen Button and Joe Iles pose for a photo ahead of the 13th annual Jolly Jog at the Haliburton Highlands Museum on Sunday. The event saw dozens of festive runners hit the snowy trails. /ADAM FRISK staff

Children play in the snow ahead of the 13th annual Jolly Jog.

Christmas in the County

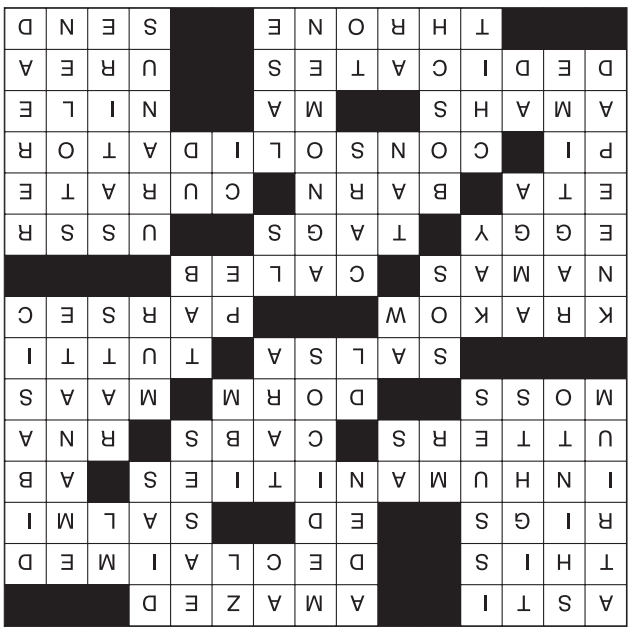
Shimmy at the Shindig

The annual Fuel for Warmth Shindig had attendees moving and grooving to some local tunes while raising money for the local heat bank on Saturday at the Haliburton Legion. /TIM YANO staff photographer

SUDOKU SOLUTION

7	2	8	6	3	4	9	5	1
6	1	9	5	2	8	4	3	7
5	3	4	1	9	7	8	6	2
8	7	2	4	5	6	3	1	9
3	9	6	7	1	2	5	4	8
1	4	5	3	8	9	2	7	6
9	5	3	8	7	1	6	2	4
2	6	7	9	4	3	1	8	5
4	8	1	2	6	5	7	9	3

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



Brought to you by

SUDOKU

		8		3	4		5	
6	1		5		8			
		2	4				1	9
	9			1				
			3	8				6
		3	8			6		4
	8	1	2	6				3

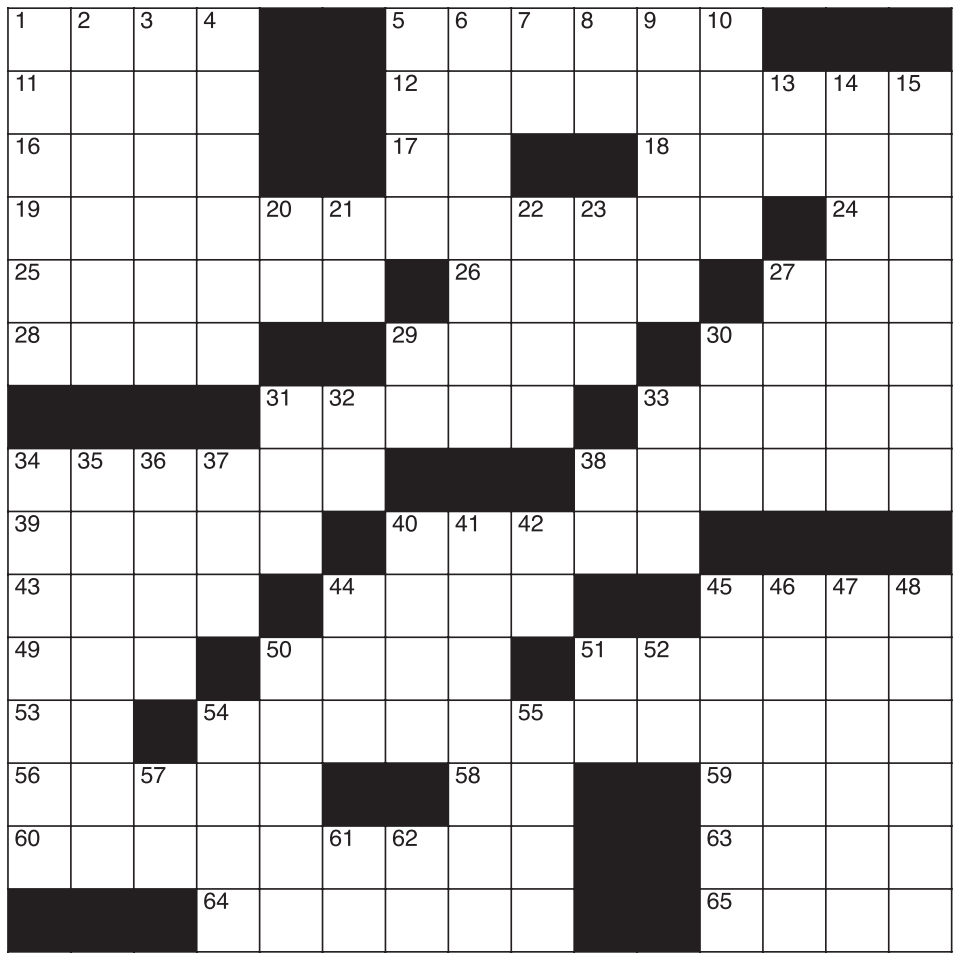
Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 17



CLUES ACROSS
1. Popular wine __ Spumante
5. Greatly impressed
11. __ and that
12. Uttered with passion
16. Boats
17. Veteran actor Harris
18. Casserole with game
19. Reprehensible acts
24. They precede C
25. Says under oneÕs breath
26. Taxis
27. It transfers genetic info
28. NFL great Randy
29. Where college students sleep
30. Major European river
31. Taco condiment
33. -frutti
34. Polish city
38. Astronomy unit
39. Khoikhoin peoples
40. Bears QB Williams
43. Scrambled, fried, boiled
44. Price indicators
45. One-time world power
49. When you hope to get somewhere
50. Farm building
51. Choose carefully
53. Magnum was one
54. One who combines
56. Nursemaids
58. Partner to Pa
59. Notable river
60. Officially honors
63. Colorless compound
64. A fancy chair
65. Email function

CLUES DOWN
1. The central area in a building
2. Religion of Japan
3. Leggings
4. Officially distributes
5. Arabian Sea seaport
6. Spanish doctors
7. It cools your house
8. Currency of Poland
9. Slowly moves into
10. Days (Spanish)
13. Unit of volume
14. Emit
15. With two replaceable hydrogens
20. Title for a man
21. Equally
22. Scarlett's home
23. One-time tech titan
27. Subway dwellers
29. One-tenth of a liter
30. Central European river
31. Distress signal
32. Expression of sympathy
33. The bill in a restaurant
34. Football equipment
35. Dance music
36. Russian river
37. Cosmetics giant Mary __
38. Gym class
40. Automobiles
41. Roman honorific
42. Losses in sports
44. Skin tone in summer
45. Distant planet
46. Critical humor
47. Illegally obtained
48. Go back over
50. Home appliance brand
51. Unit of radioactivity
52. Home of the Flyers
54. Short official note
55. Emit coherent radiation
57. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)
61. Most common noble gas (abbr.)
62. Toward

Answers on page 17

Youth hangout at Youth Unlimited's Bridge Centre in Haliburton.

Youth play volleyball outside of Youth Unlimited's Bridge Centre in Haliburton. /submitted

Bridge Centre celebrates one year

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

Youth need more things to do outside of school and being at home.

That is the mission of Youth Unlimited. To provide a space like the Bridge Centre to allow youth to come out after school to hang out with their friends.

Youth Unlimited is celebrating one year of opening their new Bridge Centre in Haliburton in the former home of Seasons Hair Salon and Spa. Their goal is to see potential in youth and help them become a key member in their community.

Youth Unlimited has been operating in Haliburton County for 18 years. During the past seven, the organization did not have a building to call home.

In September of last year, the group received the keys to the Bridge Centre building. Opening in January of this year, Programming Director Leanne Young says that they have expanded their offerings. Instead of just servicing teenagers, the Bridge Centre now houses programming for youth from Grade 4 to Grade 12. For the younger years, their program is registered and fully structured.

"Any youth can come and hang out," said Young.

In the springtime when the weather is warm, Haliburton youth can be found in the park, library or the school.

Young says that a majority of the youth that use the Bridge Centre are from the surrounding towns that are not within a walking distance like Lochlin, West Guilford, and Harcourt.

"With the rise of mental health crises, we know that the best way to combat anxiety and depression is positive community with their peers and caring adults," said Young. "We knew a place like this needed to exist that is warm, a safe place to go, and their parents know that it is safe and supervised."

When the Bridge Centre first opened, they saw 12 youth visiting their space. As word has spread and Young's husband Kyle has worked with local youth at the high school, the Bridge Centre now sees up to 60 youth per day.

In the winter, visitors can expect a warm cup of hot chocolate and a snack for when they arrive.

On the day when teenagers can visit the Bridge Centre, Young organizes cooking nights for the participants to share responsibilities of cooking a dinner together. They also eat dinner together as a family.

The Bridge Centre has a gaming room, fully equipped kitchen, recreational space near the building, and furniture you would find in your living room.

For the younger youth, there are organized activities like crafts and games.

Young says that many families in the county are struggling with the current economy. For those that cannot afford to drive to Lindsay to play sports and afford equipment, the youth can come and play games and be active at the Bridge Centre. Youth Unlimited also offers a gym night for youth each month.

"Sometimes youth need to talk about how things are going," said Young. "When their parents are stressed out, their kids are also stressed out."

When youth are becoming teenagers and learning independence, Young says that there are some awkward bumps along the way.

There are no bad kids, they are just bored, says Young.

"When you visit the Bridge Centre, it feels like you are coming home," she said.

The youth program has grown to 24 volunteers with Haliburton's Youth Unlimited.

When full, the Bridge Centre is uproarious with joy and laughter.

"It is loud but the youth are just having fun," said Young. "The joy in here is contagious."

On Saturday, Nov. 29, Youth Unlimited will be hosting their Concert of Hope at Lakeside Church from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The event will feature live music, dancers, a raffle, and bake sale to raise money to support youth programming in Haliburton County.

The money will be going towards paying for staffing. To continue their growth, Young says that they plan on hiring a part-time team member in the new year.

Youth Unlimited is currently supported by local businesses, local community groups, and generous members of the community. With no current grant funding, any donations are appreciated to continue their offerings.

For the youth that visit the Bridge Centre, they are supported and told that they matter. For some of these youth, it is the only place they have where an adult will talk with them, support them, and let them know that they matter.

Haliburton Highlands Land Trust launches online holiday auction

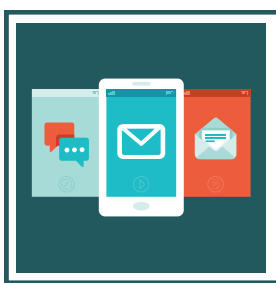
The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust will be hosting their online holiday auction from Sunday Nov. 23rd through Dec. 10, 2025. There will be over 100 wonderful items to bid on from vacation stays, art, guided hikes, and so much more. This year's theme of "Taking care of what takes care of us" reflects HHLT's mission to protect nature in Haliburton and establish new hiking trails for our community to enjoy. To support nature in Haliburton please visit www.galabid.com/haliburton-highlands.

About the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust (HHLT)

The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) is a community-led, non-government environmental charity that has been serving Haliburton County since 2005. Our mission is to care for the land and waters of Haliburton County for the benefit of our community and future generations.

We do this through the conservation and stewardship of private lands donated to us, or directly acquired. We currently protect six properties covering 1,394 acres of ecologically valuable land, two of which feature publicly available hiking trails. We also provide land stewardship support to over 50 local land owners through our Partners In Conservation program.

Submitted



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to

emily@haliburtonpress.com

Share the Warmth; thank you for an extraordinary season of generosity

SIRCH Community Services would like to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made this year's Share the Warmth program a truly record-breaking success.

Thanks to the generous people of Haliburton County and Hastings County, we collected more winter gear than ever before - a remarkable outpouring of coats, boots, hats, mitts, snow pants, and cold-weather essentials.

Because of your kindness, we were able to give away 1,390 pieces of winter gear this year. That works out to 262 families who were struggling that now, face the cold winter with comfort, dignity, and hope.

We also extend heartfelt thanks to our incredible collection partners, whose community spirit made this campaign possible:

Haliburton:
Foodland Haliburton
Todd's Independent
Glecoff's
Haliburton Home Hardware

Minden:
Dollo's Foodland
Home Hardware
St. Paul's Anglican Church
Minden Valu-mart

A huge thank you to our dedicated Volunteers, including our amazing SIRCH Event Volunteers and the team at Braun Custom Builds, for giving your time, energy, and heart. Your efforts helped deliver, sort, organize, and distribute thousands of winter items across the region.

We are also grateful to our local media partners for helping spread the word and ensuring those who needed this program heard about it:

MOOSE FM, Canoe FM, *Haliburton Echo, County Life, Minden Times, The Highlander, Bancroft This Week,* and the *Bancroft Times,* My Haliburton Now and My Bancroft Now.

Your support helped bring this program to life across both counties.

This 10th annual event was a record-breaking year for Share the Warmth - and it happened because our community cares deeply for one another.

Together, we've truly Shared the Warmth.

For more information, call SIRCH at 705-457-1742 or visit www.sirch.on.ca

Submitted

Classifieds

Call 705-457-1037
classifieds@haliburtonpress.com
Deadline Friday at 12 pm

BUSINESS FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Into the Blue Woodfired Pizza Business. Seasonal truck and catering business. Comes fully equipped and ready to go for the 2026 season. Contact info@abbeygardens.ca for more details and information

WANTED

Wanted: scrap cars and trucks. Cash paid. Please call **705-286-3758** or cell **249-332-1212**

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Large one-bedroom apartment available for rent December 1st. Single, mature, non-smoking tenants preferred. Fully furnished. Includes water access, private entrance, and 400 sq foot screened porch. 10 minute drive from Haliburton. $1700 per month. Includes hydro, heat, wifi, and parking. Seniors welcomed. Please call 705-457-0861. Pictures available upon request.

COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT

Meeting Space for Rent: Blue Sky Studio at Haliburton Chiropractic. Bright open space downtown with private entrance and washroom. Available for rent by the hour, half or full day. Contact: **705-457-3500** info@haliburtonchiropractic.com

COMING EVENTS

The annual craft Sale of the Wilberforce Heritage Guild. **HOLIDAY CRAFT SALE**. Lloyd Watson Centre, 2249 Loop Rd., Wilberforce. **Saturday, November 29**. Hours 9:00am to 2:00pm. Lunch will be available from the Wilberforce Legion Ladies Auxiliary. Lots of great items for sale from our large room of venders, including holiday treats & baked goods, Christmas decorations and a large variety of gift items. Questions & information for venders' contact Barb Schofield at 705-448-2598, or email wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

SIRCH Bistro & Bakery

BISTRO & BAKERY MANAGER – FULL TIME
Haliburton, ON

SIRCH Community Services is looking for an experienced café or restaurant manager to lead our Bistro & Bakery. You will oversee daily operations, supervise a small team, improve efficiencies, and help grow this valued social enterprise toward sustainability.

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Apply by email to info@sirch.on.ca
Learn more at www.sirch.on.ca

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We thank all applicants for their interest, however only those candidates selected for interviews will be contacted.

DYSART ET AL
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Digital Transformation Specialist
(13-month contract, full-time)

Due to an upcoming maternity leave, the Municipality of Dysart et al is seeking an energetic individual to join our team in the role of Digital Transformation Specialist. Salary range is $80,464 - $94,131 commensurate with skills and experience. A detailed job description is available at dysartetal.ca/careers for your review.

Interested applicants may submit their resume and cover letter to Sonja Marx at hr@dysartetal.ca, and indicate Digital Transformation Specialist as the subject. Applications must be submitted via email and may be accepted until 4:00 pm on Friday, November 28, 2025, with an anticipated start date of February 2, 2026.

We thank all of those who apply, but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Accommodations for applicants with disabilities will be provided upon request. The Municipality of Dysart et al is an equal opportunity employer. Personal information is collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used only for employment purposes.

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton
Requires a
Temporary Full-time Truck Driver/Equipment Operator

Truck Driver/Equipment Operators are responsible for the safe operation of heavy equipment such as a trucks, backhoes,loaders, and wing plows. This is a temporary contract. Successful applicants will possess an DZ/AZ licence and have experience operating heavy equipment. This position requires good judgment and communication skills and an ability to work on-call hours and respond to short notice call ins. The hourly rate for this unionized CUPE position is $29.17.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a more detailed posting and job description.
Please forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than December 4, 2025, at 4:30pm.

We thank all who apply for this position; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.
The County of Haliburton is an equal opportunity employer.
Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.
In accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

Get it online
www.haliburtonecho.ca
www.mindentimes.ca

CARD OF THANKS

The Baumann Family would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Fire fighters from Haliburton and Algonquin Highlands who responded to the fire at our cottage on Kennisis Lake on the morning of October 26. The fire was skillfully extinguished, preventing its spread beyond our residence. We will be forever grateful.

Baumann family

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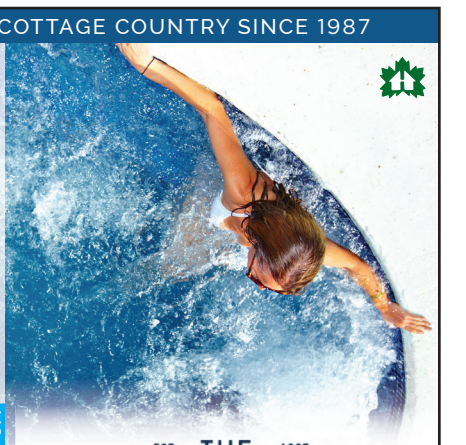

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Packing a punch
Fourteen-year-old Jake Graham of Minden throws a punch during a karate class led by shodan Owen MacKeigan of the Minden Wado-Kai Karate Club last Wednesday at Archie Stouffer Elementary School in Minden. Classes are held Wednesday and Friday evenings. MacKeigan, who is an alternate in kumite (one-on-one fighting) with the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation National Team, has students from six-years-old and up. His grandfather and nidan Sid MacKeigan also instructs. For more information call 705-286-4259. **Darren Lum** Staff

Less severe winter expected

David Phillips tells the *Times* he's not expecting a repeat of last year's weather

Chad Ingram
Staff reporter

This winter should not be as severe as the frigid, snowy winter Haliburton County residents and many Canadians experienced last year.

Haliburtonians and most Ontarians woke up to a blanket of snow Monday morning, with five to 10 centimetres of the stuff falling.

"This is kind of the first test for us this year," David Phillips, senior climatologist with Environment Canada, told the *Times* on Nov. 17. "We're seeing, provincewide, more snow than we've had."

While the county had received some snow in days prior, Monday marked the first substantial snowfall of the season for much of the province.

"The winds are going to be very strong," Phillips said, explaining more snow and accompanying snow squalls were expected during the first few days of the week. "As they move away, the cold air is going move in."

The snow falling Monday came from what Phillips referred to as the lake effect engine, cooler atmospheric conditions, sweeping across warmer lakes and picking up water

see TEMPERATURES page 5

Places for People continues to grow

Chad Ingram
Staff reporter

2014 was a big year for Places for People, with the non-profit housing corporation opening its third rental property.

The organization held its annual general meeting at Carnarvon's Zion United Church on Nov. 14 and president Max Ward revisited the project, which renovated a house on Minden's Newcastle Street into an affordable rental unit.

"The open house itself was a huge success," said Ward of the March event, noting it garnered the attention of CTV.

Tenants moved in April 1.

A rent supplement from the Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton Housing Corporation came in handy when the tenants suffered a vehicle collision, interrupting their employment for a number of weeks.

August also saw a tenant from Places for People's Carnarvon building achieve her goal of being able to afford her own home.

There was a smooth transition of new tenants into the space, meaning no interruption in rent for the corporation.

Rent is used to pay mortgages and utilities and each month, five per cent of tenants' rent is put into a trust fund for them to access.

As outgoing board member and chairman of the tenant selection committee Norris Turner noted, this year three families

see REVENUE page 2

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MINDEN SUBARU

Smile!
The Haliburton County Huskies pose with their batches of smile cookies during the annual Tim Hortons Holiday Cookie Campaign. Proceeds went towards local food banks. /submitted

OPP reminds drivers they must stop for school buses

The Central Region Headquarters of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is reminding all motorists of the critical importance of stopping for school buses when their overhead red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended.

Under the Highway Traffic Act, drivers must stop at least 20 metres away from a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing and stop arm activated. Failing to do so is not only illegal but puts children's lives at risk. This applies to drivers approaching from both directions unless the roadway is divided by a median.

Penalties for failing to stop for a school bus include:

- First offence: Fine of $400 to $2,000, six demerit points, and a significant increase in insurance premiums.
- Subsequent offences: Fine of $1,000 to $4,000, six demerit points, and possible jail time up to six months.
- Vehicle owners can also be charged if their vehicle is involved, even if they were not driving at the time.

Safety Tips for Drivers:

- Stop when school bus lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended. It's the law.
- Stay alert in school zones and residential areas where children may be walking or biking.
- Watch for children crossing roads and walking to school, especially during peak times (7 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 5 p.m.).
- Put your phone away. Don't drive distracted! Distractions can cost lives.

The OPP urges the public to report any incidents of vehicles failing to stop for school buses by calling 9-1-1 and providing the vehicle description, license plate number, location, and time of the incident. If reporting after-the-fact, members of the public can also contact the non-emergency line at 1-888-310-1122 or submit information anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or online at ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

For more information on school bus safety, visit Ontario.ca/schoolbus.

Submitted

www.mindenhills.ca **In Case of Emergency Dial 911 / After-Hours Municipal Emergency Dial 1-866-856-3247**

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COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

November 27 – Regular Council Meeting
December 11 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

- A selection of artwork from the Agnes Jamieson Gallery's permanent collection, as well as new acquisitions, is now on display. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.
- Join the UFO's (UnFinished Objects Craft Group) in the Welch Room on Friday, November 28 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. All are welcome!

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

NOTICE OF DELAYED OPENING HOURS

The following facilities will have delayed opening hours on Wednesday, December 3, 2025:
- Township of Minden Hills Municipal Office (7 Milne St.);
- SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena – Administration Office (55 Parkside St.); and
- Minden Hills Fire - Administration Office (12418 Hwy. 35)

All the **noted facilities will open later than normal** to provide an opportunity for Municipal Staff to participate in a Holiday Staff Appreciation Breakfast. Business will **resume as normal at 9:45 a.m.** on this date. We appreciate your patience and understanding regarding this matter.

*Please note our Emergency Services will respond as needed, the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena (public will have access to facilities at the Arena) and the Municipal Waste Facilities will operate per normal hours (Scotch Line and Iron mine are closed on Wednesdays, Little Gull and Ingoldsby Transfer Stations are both open at 10 AM).

For questions or additional information please contact:
Cynthia Fletcher, Chief Administrative Officer
P: 705-286-1260; Email: admin@mindenhills.ca

SAFE WINTER DRIVING

When a winter storm is expected, all municipalities have a plan. Drivers need to have their own plan. It is important to delay unnecessary travel during significant storms to give plows time to do their jobs. It's also safer for drivers.

STRATEGIC PLAN – HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF MINDEN HILLS

The Township of Minden Hills is working with Karen Jones Consulting Inc. to develop a Strategic Plan. We will be hosting sessions to gather information regarding priorities, opportunities for growth, collaboration, and more.
- Community Session – Thursday, November 27, 2025 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena Community Room 1
- Business Session – Friday, November 28, 2025 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena Community Room 1

The sessions are open to everyone. Kindly register to assist with session logistics. For information visit www.mindenhills.ca/newsroom or email admin@mindenhills.ca.

NOTICE OF 2026 BUDGET MEETINGS

Take Notice that there will be a Special meeting of Council and Public Meeting held on December 15, 2025 at 9:00 AM. The purpose of the meetings is to review and discuss the 2026 Mayoral Budget. Members of the public may access the agenda and Budget materials on December 10, 2025. Members of the public are invited to participate in person or electronically and make comment/speak at the Public Meeting relating to the 2026 budget. Members of the public wishing to participate electronically must pre-register by emailing admin@mindenhills.ca by Friday, December 12th, before 4:00 pm. Please visit our website for further details.
For questions, please contact:
Vicki Bull, Clerk
Township of Minden Hills, 705-286-1260 ext. 515

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